



44 M^r Cumberland
Bishopsgate

Windsor Great Park

Dear Cumberland

I have to congratulate you on your plan for a National Gallery being put into Execution. All your wishes shall in due time be fulfilled the immense flood of Grecian light & glory which is coming on Europe will more than realize our warmest wishes. Your honour will be unbounded when your plan shall be carried into Execution as it must be if England continues a Nation. I hear that it is now in the hands of Ministers that the King shows it great Countenance & Encouragement that it will soon be before Parliament & that it must be extended & enlarged to take in Originals both of Painting & Sculpture by considering every valuable original that is brought into England or can be purchased Abroad as its objects of Acquisition. Such is the Plan as I am told & such must be the plan if England wishes to continue at all worth notice as you have yourself observed only now we must possess Originals as well as France or be Nothing.

Excuse I entreat you my not returning Thanks at the proper moment for your kind present. No persuasion could make my stupid head believe that it was proper for me to trouble you with a letter of mere Compliment & Expression of Thanks.

I begin to emerge from a deep pit of Melancholy. Melancholy without any real reason for it. a Disease which God keep you from & all good men. Our artists of all ranks praise your outlines & wish for more Flaxman is very warm in your commendation & more & more of a Grecian. Mr Mayley has lately mentioned your

Work on outline in Notes to Quattro on Sculpture an Essay on Sculpture
in Six Quattro to John Flaxman, I have been too little among
friends which I fear they will not excuse & I know not how to
apologize for. Poor Fuseli sore from the lash of Envious tongues
praises you & disparages with the same breath. He is not naturally
good natured but he is artfully very ill natured yet even
from him I learn the Estimation you are held in among artists
& connoisseurs.

I am still Employed in making Designs & little Pictures
with now & then an Engraving & find that in future to live will
not be so difficult as it has been. It is very extraordinary that
London in so few years from a City of mean Necessaries or at least
a commerce of the lowest order of luxuries should have become a
City of Elegance in some degree & that its once shaggy inhabitants
should enter into an emulation of Grecian manners. There are
now I believe as many Booksellers as there are Butchers & as
many Printshops as of any other trade. We remember when
a Print shop was a rare bird in London. & I myself remember
when I thought my pursuits of Art a kind of Criminal Vagabondage
& neglect of the main chance which I hid my face for not
being able to abandon as a Papion which is forbidden by Law &
Religion but now it appears to be Law & Gospel too. at least
I hear so from the few friends I have dared to visit in my stupor
Melancholy. Excuse this communication of sentiments which

I felt necessary to my upon at this time. I feel very strongly
that I neglect my Duty to my Friends but It is not
want of Gratitude or Friendship but perhaps an excess of both
Let me hear of your welfare. Remember My & My Wifes
Respectful Compliments to Mr Cumberland & Family
& believe me to be for ever
Yours

13 Hercules Buildings
Lambeth
2 July 1800

William Blake

Dear Brother

Felpham Jan. 30 - 1803

Your Letter mentioning Mr Butts' account of my Ague surprised me because I have no Ague but have had a Cold this Winter. You know that it is my way to make the best of every thing. I never make myself nor my friends uneasy if I can help it. My Wife has had Agues & Rheumatism almost ever since she has been here but our times almost out that we took the Collage for. I did not mention our sickness to you & wrote not to Mr Butts but for a determination which we have lately made namely To leave This Place because I am now certain of what I have long doubted viz that as jealous as Richard was & will be no further my friend than he is compelled by circumstances. The truth is as a ~~man~~ he is friendly at one & as a Painter his views & mine are opposite he thinks to turn me into a Portrait Painter as he did Poor Romney. but this he nor all the Devils in hell will never do. I must own that seeing H. like I Envious (& that he is I am now certain) made me very uneasy. but it is over & I now defy the worst & fear not while I am true to myself which I will be. This is the uneasiness I spoke of to Mr Butts but I did not tell him so plain & wish you to keep it a secret & to burn this Letter because it speaks so plain. I told Mr Butts that I did not wish to Explore too much the cause of our determination to leave Felpham because of pecuniary connexions between it & me. Be not then uneasy on any account & tell my Sister not to be uneasy for I am fully Employed & Well Paid. I have made it so much H's interest to employ me that he can no longer treat me with indifference & now it is in my power to stay or return or remove to any other place that I choose. because I am getting before hand in money matters. The Profits arising from Publications are immense &

I now have it in my power to commence publication with many very formidable works. which I have finished & ready. A Book price half a Guinea may be got out at the expense of Ten pounds & its almost certain profits are 500£. I am only sorry that I did not know the method of publishing years ago & this is one of the numerous benefits I have obtained by coming here for I should never have known the nature of Publication unless I had known H & his connections & his method of managing. It ~~now~~^{would} be folly not to venture publishing. I am now engraving six little plates for a little work of W.H.'s for which I am to have 10 £ each & the certain profits of that work are a fortune such as would make me independent supposing that I could substantiate such a one of my own & I mean to try many. But I again say as I said before We are very happy sitting at tea by a wood fire in our College the wind singing above our roof & the sea roaring at a distance but if sickness comes all is unpleasant.

But my letter to Mr Butts appears to me not to be so explicit as that to you for I told you that I should come to London in the Spring to commence Publishing & he ^{has} offered me every assistance in his power ^{without knowing my intention}. But since I wrote yours we had made the resolution of which we informed him very to leave Felfham entirely. I also told you what I was about & that I was not ignorant of what was doing in London in works of art. But I did not mention Illness because I hoped to get better for I was really very ill when I wrote to him the last time & was not then persuaded as I am now that the air the warm is unhealthy.

However this I know will set you at ease. I am now so full of work that I have had no time to go on with the Ballad. & my prospects of more & more work continually are certain. My Head of Congress for W.H.'s

life of Cowper have pleased his Relations exceedingly & in
Particular Lady Hesketh & Lord Cowper ^{to please} Lady H. was a
doubtful chance who almost adored her Cousin the poet &
thought him all perfection & she writes that she is quite satis-
fied with the portraits & charmed by the great Head in
particular tho she never could bear the original Picture

But I ought to mention to you that our present idea
is. To take a house in some village further from the Sea
Perhaps Lavant. & in or near the road to London for
the sake of convenience - I also ought to inform you that I
read your letter to Mr H & that he is very afraid of losing
me & also very afraid that my Friends in London should
have a bad opinion of the reception he has given to me
But My Wife has undertaken to print the whole number of the
Plates for Cowper work which she does to admiration &
being under my own eye the prints are as fine as the French
prints & please every one. in short I have got everything
so under my thumb that it is more profitable that things
should be as they are than any other way. No not so agree-
able because we wish naturally for friendships in preference
to interest. — The Publishers are already indebted to My Wife
Twenty Guineas for work delivered this is a small specimen
of how we go on. then fear nothing & let my Sister fear nothing
because it appears to me that I am now too old & have had
too much experience to be any longer imposed upon only
illness makes all uncomfortable & this we must prevent by
every means in our power

I send with this 5 Copies of N 4 of the Ballads
for Mr Hazman & Two more two of which you will
be so good as to give to Mr Chelwynd if he should call or
send for them. These Ballads are likely to be profitable

for we have sold all that we have had time to print. Evans
the Bookseller in Pallmall says they go off very well & where
should we repent of having done them it is done Nothing
that is to be repented of & not doing such things as these

Pray remember us both to Mr Hall when you see him
I write in great haste & with a head full of Cogitation
about various projected works & particularly, a work now
Proposed to the Public at the End of Cowpers Life. which
will very likely be of great consequence it is Cowpers
Milton the same that Fuseli's Milton Gallery was
printed for, & if we succeed in our intentions the
prints to this work will be very profitable to me &
not only profitable but honourable at any rate The
Project pleases Lord Cowper's family, & I am now
labouring in my thoughts Designing for this & other
works equally Creditable There are works to be boasted
of & therefore I cannot feel deprived tho I know that
as far as Designing & Poetry are concerned I am Envid
in many Quarters. but I will cram the Dogs for I
know that the Public are my friends & love my works &
will embrace them whenever they see them My only Def-
-ficiency is to produce fast enough.

I go on Merrily with my Greek & Latin. am very
sorry that I did not begin to learn Languages early in life
as I find it very Easy. am now learning my Hebrew. IIN
I read Greek as fluently as an Oxford scholar & the Testament
is my chief master astonishing indeed is the English Translation
it is almost word for word & if the Hebrew Bible is as well
translated which I do not doubt it is We need not doubt of
its having been translated as well as written by the Holy Ghost
my wife joins me in Love to you both I am sincerely yours
W Blake

Dear Sir

I hope you will excuse my Delay in sending the Books which I have had some time but kept them back till I could send a Proof of the *Myrswick* which I hope will please. It yet wants all its last & finishing touches. but I hope you will be enabled by it to judge of the Pathos of the Picture

I send Washington 2^d Vol: — 5 Numbers of Fuseli's *Shakespeare* & two Vol's with a Letter from Mr Spilsbury with whom I accidentally met on the Strand. he says that he relinquish'd Painting as a Profession. for which I think he is to be applauded. but I conceive that he may be a much better Painter if he practises secretly & for amusement than he could ever be if employed in the duncery of fashionable dabbling for a poor pittance of money in return for the sacrifice of Art & Genius. he says he never will leave to practise the Art because he loves it & this alone will pay its labour by success if not of money yet of Fine Art. which is all —

I had the pleasure of a call from Mrs Chetwynd & her Brother. a Gentleman in body mind & polite in soul as I have in general found great bodies to be they were much pleased with Romney's Designs. Mrs C. sent to me the two articles for you & for the safety of which by the Coach I had some from all Mr Meyer obligingly undertook to convey them safe he is now I suppose enjoying the delights of the Parrot of lovely Felpham please to give my affectionate compliments to him.

I cannot help suggesting an Idea which has struck me very forcibly had the Tomb & Tomb in your Cathedral would make a very beautiful Engraving done in the same manner as the Head of Cooper after Lawrence. The Head to be finished & the figures left exactly in imitation of the first sketch of the Painter The Representation of those truly Pathetic Heads would thus be transmitted to the Public a singular Monument of Romney's Genius in that highest branch of Art

I must now tell my wants & beg the favor of some more of the useful
the

favor of ten Pounds more will carry me thro this Plate & the Head of Romney
for which I am already paid. You shall soon see a Proof of them in a
very advanced state I have not yet proved it but shall soon when I will
send you one - I rejoice to hear from Mr Meyer of Miss Coates
continued recovery My wife desires with me her respects to you & her
to all whom we love that is to all sisters

Yrs affectionately

I remain Your sincere & Obedient Servant

28 Sept^r 1804

Will. Blake

To

William Hayley Esq^r

Felpham

X

Mr Linnell
Conceptor Place
Fitzroy Square

Dear Sir

I thank you for the Four Pounds received to day
and getting better every Morning but slowly. as I am still feeble
& tottering. tho all the symptoms of my complaint seem almost
gone as the fine weather is very beneficial & comfortable to me
I go on as I think improving my Improving of Nature more & more
& shall soon get Proofs of their Power which I have & by the favor
of you to send me the two Plates of Paint which you have that I
may finish them sufficiently to make some shew of Colour & strength

I have thought & thought of the Removal & cannot get my mind
out of a state of terrible fear at such a step. the more I think the
more I feel terror at what I write at first I thought it a thing
of benefit & Good hope you will attribute it to its right cause
Intellectual Peculiarly that must be myself alone shut up on
myself or Reduced to Nothing. I could tell you of Vision &
Pains upon the Subject I have asked & intrusted Divine help
but fear continues upon me & must relinquish the step that
I had wished to take & still wish but in vain

Your Success in your Profession is above all things to
me most gratifying. may it go on to the Perfection you wish
& more

So wither also Yours Sincerely

William Blake